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ABSTRACT

Noting that reading can have different purposes, this annotated bibliography features "books for good reading that are also good for you." The list contains a large number of biographies. Recently added books are marked with a diamond. The list contains 126 books, many of them very recent but some of them old and personal favorites of the annotator. At the end of the list are six "rules for regular readers." (NKA)

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BOOK LIST

2000

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"The man who does not read good books has no advantage over the man who can't read them."

Mark Twain

"Some books are to be tasted; others swallowed; and some to be chewed and digested."

Francis Bacon

Features

- ***New Preface***
- ***Twenty-two Recently Suggested Books***

Richard P. Nathan

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PREFACE

A book is different from a website. It takes a couple weeks or a month to read a book. It is an experience; it stays with you and builds intellectual capital. Hopefully, books won't go out of style.

Reading can have different purposes like a serious hobby. My reading hobby is history and biography, accumulating ideas from books that provide perspective for understanding events as they unfold. Right now, I am fascinating by the extraordinary pace of change in the way people live in the information age.

James Madison, my American hero, took a week to travel by muddy roads (really not more than paths) from his home in Virginia to Philadelphia where he provided the special genius that still infuses our governmental system. He didn't have a cell phone, much less e-mail, so he could stay in instant and continuous contact with his colleagues in the great Constitutional enterprise.

Thomas Friedman's book and other books on this year's list showing how government's role is more and more limited as e-commerce ignores national boundaries raises profound ques-

tions about the role of government and how its slow, cumbersome decision processes impede even the most obvious applications of technology to the way governments function.

In my own area of special interest, focusing on state and local human service programs, the new technology is perfectly suited to helping poor and working poor families in comprehensive and responsive ways, yet the pace of change to apply technology to this task is agonizingly slow.

Reading in fields that reach into the past and expose you to ideas and experiences different from your own has a double utility. It provides perspective, and on a very practical basis, it is a way to put things that are happening in a context that helps us understand them.

When I began teaching at Princeton University in the early 1980s, I decided to include in each lecture a reference to a recommended book for outside, personal reading. At the beginning of the term, I told students you won't be really educated when you leave. You should continue to read and learn. I especially suggested that students read history and biographies. I said there are many wonderful, exciting, fun-to-read books you can read with pleasure at night when you are tired and on vacations. Then, to show that students would receive benefit from this good practice, I would quote from a recommended book to embellish a particular point in my lecture.

After several such references, students began to snicker, smile, look skeptical, like, "Who does this guy think he is?" each time I came to this point in my lecture. So I stopped the practice. But I didn't stop making this list and saving up memories of books I have especially liked (everyone's taste is different).

For two decades I have circulated this list of books for good reading that are also good for you. Many people have commented on the list, sent me suggestions of books to add, and sent me copies of their own lists. A person's book list tells a lot about one's character. I am sure people have been psychoanalyzing me based on my choices. Nonetheless, I continue the practice. In fact, I think everyone should have a book list. It's like an intellectual calling card.

A large number of the books on this list are biographies. Often, when I pick up a biography, as in the case of Ron Chernow's richly textured book about John D. Rockefeller, *The Titan*, I find it works to begin in the middle. Most peoples' lives are most interesting in the middle. In the case of familiar historical figures, you often know a lot about the story. If you start in the middle, I find that then when you go back and read the first part of a good book, the subject's early experiences take on more meaning and are more interesting.

For this edition, there is a diamond indicating recently added books. As I do each year in preparing this list, I re-visited old friends (book friends that is), and in some cases added comments about particular books. The list is changed somewhat from last year, but not appreciably. After all, the idea all along has been to suggest books notable for their *lasting influence*.

Richard P. Nathan
Albany, New York

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

2000

Dean Acheson, *PRESENT AT THE CREATION: MY YEARS IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT.* A personal account of the birth of the institutions that bound the West together against the political and military threat of Stalin's Soviet Union. Acheson deserves major credit for what was accomplished. His book contains wonderful memories of Truman and Marshall.

Henry Adams, *THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS.* This is an old book, yet a wise and interesting one. I particularly like what Adams had to say about both Roosevelts. When his friend T.R. became President, Adams reflected that it would never be the same again. He said, "A friend in power is a friend lost."

Later when Adams befriended the young FDR and his wife, he is reported to have said to them when FDR was assistant secretary of the Navy, pointing to the White House across the street from where he (Henry Adams) lived (now the hotel), "Young man, I have lived in this house many years and seen the occupants of that white house across the square come and go and nothing that you minor officials or the occupant of that house can do will affect the history of the world for long." (As told by Nathan Miller in his biography of FDR.)

You may not want to read all of *The Education*, but it's worth reading a lot of this sensitive third-person self-examination of a life close to power in the coming-of-age of America.

◆ Stephen E. Ambrose, *UNDAUNTED COURAGE: MERIWETHER LEWIS, THOMAS JEFFERSON, AND THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN WEST.* I'm not a special admirer of Ambrose because he writes so much and obviously so fast, but this is a fine book and a story he really knows, loves, and has lived vicariously.

Carlos Baker, *EARNEST HEMINGWAY: A LIFE STORY*. This is the definitive biography of Hemingway by Carlos Baker about a "man's man . . . proud of his manhood" who lived an amazing life, says Baker.

Carlos Baker, *EMERSON AMONG THE ECCENTRICS: A GROUP PORTRAIT*. Along with recounting the life of Emerson and the transcendentalism movement, Baker has a lot to say about Emerson's friends – Thoreau, Hawthorne, Whitman, Melville, and other writers associated with the cultural flowering of New England. My dictionary defines transcendentalism as "the 19th century New England movement stressing the presence of the divine within man as a source of truth and a guide to action."

- Leonard Baker, *JOHN MARSHALL: A LIFE IN LAW*. This big book won't interest everyone. Baker's description of Marshall's contribution to the development of American government is exceptional.

- David Haward Bain, *EMPIRE EXPRESS: BUILDING THE FIRST TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD*. This is not an easy read, but it packs a wallop. When Brian Lamb interviewed the author on C-SPAN, he got the story into focus. He showed pictures of the famous founders of the first transcontinental railroad (Huntington, Hopkins, Crocker, Stanford, Rep. Oaks Ames, et al.) and asked about each of them, "Was he a crook?' Bain's answer invariable was, yes, all of them were, which eventually culminated in the great *Credit Mobilier* scandal with its pay-offs to leading politicians. Everyone was on the take! John McCain is right. The modern version of the *Credit Mobilier* (campaign financing) has to be changed.

- Irving Bartlett, *DANIEL WEBSTER*. His huge ego is a story in itself. This book ably describes Webster's turbulent times (he died in 1852), which by itself is worth the price of admission.

- W. Jackson Bate, *SAMUEL JOHNSON*. Not Boswell's Johnson, but that of Harvard Professor Bate published in 1975. This life of England's leading literary scholar of the eighteenth century won the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. Bate recounts Johnson's wit as

well as his accomplishments as an influential man of letters, describing his many essays, his edition of Shakespeare's works, and his *Dictionary of the English Language*.

Andrew Scott Berg, *MAXWELL PERKINS, EDITOR OF GENIUS*. Perkins discovered Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Thomas Wolfe. This is a fine account of the development of the modern American novel.

Benson Bobrick, *ANGEL IN THE WHIRLWIND: THE TRIUMPH OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION*. A lively, fast-flowing account of the American Revolution.

Catherine Drinker Bowen, *MIRACLE AT PHILADELPHIA*. The story of the writing of the Constitution, an exciting, easy-to-read description of the origins of our governmental system.

Taylor Branch, *PARTING THE WATERS: AMERICA IN THE KING YEARS, 1954-63*. An engrossing story of the rise of Martin Luther King. The Kings vs. the Kennedys is the central plot line of this eye-opening account.

Crane Brinton, *THE SHAPING OF MODERN THOUGHT*. This is a classic, written in the mid-fifties. We are all "children of the enlightenment," on the big questions this book examines.

◆ Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *GOTHAM: A HISTORY OF NEW YORK CITY TO 1898*. Looks and feels like a coffee table book, but is readable, despite being 1,379 pages long. Take it in small bites.

Robert A. Caro, *THE POWER BROKER: ROBERT MOSES AND THE FALL OF NEW YORK*. Caro's account of the life and times of New York's master builder, Robert Moses, is a must-read book for public administrators.

Ron Chernow, *THE HOUSE OF MORGAN: AN AMERICAN BANKING DYNASTY & THE RISE OF MODERN FINANCE*. An excellent portrayal of the rise of an American banking dynasty and of modern finance.

◆ Ron Chernow, *TITAN: THE LIFE OF JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, SR*. The title of this book should read *two* lives, rather than one:

John D. Rockefeller, as the relentless, swashbuckling creator of the great kerosene/petroleum trust, and later as the monarch of a charitable empire he built in almost four decades of retirement up until his death at the age of 98 in 1937.

Ronald Clark, *EINSTEIN: THE LIFE AND TIMES*. A good biography. Not easy, but pretty easy.

Peter Collier and David Horowitz. They have done a series of family books — the Roosevelts, Kennedys, Rockefellers, and Fords. Gossipy, but often insightful, with sometimes unkind stories about the relatives, friends, and offspring of America's patriarchs and matriarchs.

Henry Steele Commager, *THE AMERICAN MIND: AN INTERPRETATION OF AMERICAN THOUGHT AND CHARACTER SINCE THE 1880s*. This is an intellectual story of the U.S. from 1880 to 1950 by one of America's great historians. It is dated, but I decided to keep it on the list. Commager's sweeping book reflects almost an innocence about the shifting spirit of America with the rise of industrialization and urbanism in the first part of the 19th century. Related to these main trends, Commager describes intellectual movements towards social scientific empiricism and ideas about blending pragmatism and activism in American politics. Among the leading characters are William James, Lester Ward, Thorsten Veblen, Herbert Croly, John R. Commons, Henry George, Louis Brandeis, Walter Lippman, Woodrow Wilson, Teddy Roosevelt, Charles Beard, Frederick Jackson Turner, Ezra Pound, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Evan S. Connell, *SON OF THE MORNING STAR: CUSTER & THE LITTLE BIGHORN*. Why did it happen? The heroism and foolishness of Custer's Last Stand reads like a mystery story.

Joseph Conrad, *LORD JIM, NOSTROMO*. His masterpieces. I especially recommend *NOSTROMO*.

◆ Jared Diamond, *GUNS, GERMS AND STEEL: THE FATES OF HUMAN SOCIETIES*. A book that looks at 13,000 years of world history and asks the question: Why did some nations conquer others? Why didn't the Incas conquer the Spanish? You will never view history in quite the same way after read-

ing this insightful book. I liked the first three parts more than the fourth and final section. Diamond gives this one-sentence description of his book:

> "Authors are regularly asked by journalists to summarize a long book in one sentence. For this book, here is such a sentence: 'History followed different courses for different peoples because of differences among peoples' environments, not because of biological differences among peoples themselves.'"

Take that Charles Murray!

Charles Dickens, *HARD TIMES*. Dickens' political economy novel is my favorite among his books.

John J. DiIulio, Jr. *GOVERNING PRISONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CORRECTIONAL MANAGEMENT*. This book is a very good read — the smart, hard hitting first book by an outstanding political scientist, arguing that prisons should be governed.

◆ David Herbert Donald, *LINCOLN*. Even though you know the story, this is a great read. It is a brilliant book about American politics.

Will Durant, *THE STORY OF PHILOSOPHY*. A comprehensive, lively book. Old but choice. Recommended as a survey of the lives and ideas of the great philosophers. I also have read parts of Durant's eleven-volume "Story of Civilization," much of which was written with his wife, Ariel. These books provide great glimpses of lives in progress. They are fun to read — though selectively. Imagine, the Durants did all of this before word processing and the Internet.

Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, *THE AGE OF FEDERALISM: THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC, 1788-1800*. This seminal account of twelve formative years of the United States reads like a novel, bringing to life the personality, roles, and rivalries of the Founders of the Republic.

Joseph J. Ellis, *AMERICAN SPHINX: THE CHARACTER OF THOMAS JEFFERSON*. This is a fascinating book that looks at events in Jefferson's life and let's the reader decide: What do

you think? Ellis is skeptical about Jefferson's legacy. Anyway, he is no Jefferson sycophant.

Joseph J. Ellis, *PASSIONATE SAGE: THE CHARACTER AND LEGACY OF JOHN ADAMS*. This is Ellis's companion book on the most crotchety of the Founding Fathers, John Adams. It is mainly based on Adams' long correspondence with his friend and long-time political adversary, Jefferson.

James Fallows, *BREAKING THE NEWS: HOW THE MEDIA UNDERMINE AMERICAN DEMOCRACY*. His discussion of "buckrakers" and "spinology" depicts a press that is more interested in money and power than hard-to-treat substantive questions. If anything, the issues Fallows raises are more serious and important now than they were when his book came out four years ago.

David Hackett Fischer, *PAUL REVERE'S RIDE*. It wasn't like you think. Fischer uses this dramatic event in a fast-paced account to show how the battles of Lexington and Concord came about and the Revolutionary War began.

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *THE GREAT GATSBY*. Were the twenties really like this?

Charles Frazier, *COLD MOUNTAIN*. This is my nomination for an American classic. Young people especially should read this book. Its strength is the poignant, insightful way the protagonist vividly sees everything around him on his ill-fated journey home from terrifying, grizzly Civil War battles at Cold Harbor, Sharpsburg, Petersburg, and Fredericksburg. Somber but it is somehow hopeful through it all.

Douglas Southall Freeman, *LEE*. A one-volume abridgment, an elegant book.

Lawrence M. Friedman, *HISTORY OF AMERICAN LAW*. Don' be put off by the title. This book is an easy and profitable read. Full of useful ideas and facts. Want to know how tort law got to be the way it is?

Thomas L. Friedman, *FROM BEIRUT TO JERUSALEM*. Friedman is a *New York Times* columnist who covered Lebanon and Israel

as a reporter in the 1980s. An exciting book about the Middle East in a critical period.

- Thomas L. Friedman, *THE LEXUS AND THE OLIVE TREE: UNDERSTANDING GLOBALIZATION*. This is the most important book I recommend for 2000. I found the first few chapters on the significance of globalization and new information technology to be overdone. But Friedman's thesis is crucial as is the way he puts it all together in his treatment of the effects of the electronic age. He is especially insightful on the changing role of government and politics and how it involves weakening government and strengthening the private sector through the international rule of the "electronic herd." I suggest starting this book with chapter 5 where Friedman describes the "golden straightjacket," which limits and weakens the power of national governments.

David Fromkin, *A PEACE TO END ALL PEACE: CREATING THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST, 1914-1922*. A history of the modern Middle East from Gallipoli to the Settlement of 1922.

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Cornel West, *THE FUTURE OF RACE*. This is a powerful book. See especially Gates' lead essay. Needed, he says, is "... a way of speaking about black advancement that doesn't distort the enduring realities of black poverty."

Doris Kearns Goodwin, *NO ORDINARY TIME: FRANKLIN & ELEANOR ROOSEVELT – THE HOMEFRONT IN WORLD WAR II*. A wonderfully vivid account of FDR and Eleanor in the War years. Don't miss this book. My mother loved it!

- Learned Hand, *THE SPIRIT OF LIBERTY*. Former Michigan Governor William Milliken suggested these essays to me. It is a collection that tells about the life of an outstanding jurist (born in Albany, New York, by the way) whose views on the American experience and the importance of tolerance for public civility make it worthwhile to buy this old book, which I did used on Amazon.com. The editor is Irving Dilliard.

Thomas Hardy, *THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE*. The best of Hardy.

Roy Harrod, *THE LIFE OF JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES*. Harrod, a colleague of Keynes, is a good storyteller.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *THE HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES*. My favorite Hawthorne.

Robert Heilbroner, *THE WORLDLY PHILOSOPHERS*. Describes the lives and work of the great economists. Not a new book, but a good one.

Gertrude Himmelfarb, *THE IDEA OF POVERTY*. This is the story of social conditions and government in 18th and 19th century England from the poor house to the Poor Law. Himmelfarb's ideas have influenced, not just other members of her distinguished family, but many prominent opinion leaders as well as social policies have shifted in the 90s.

◆ Adam Hochschild, *KING LEOPOLD'S GHOST*. This ugly story is riveting and memorable. Leopold never set foot in a land he pilfered. Re-read Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, afterwards to feel the horror of the Congo. Conrad appears in Hochchild's book, which recounts his steaming up the Congo River.

Richard Hofstadter, *THE AGE OF REFORM*. There are few better books on progressivism in America. The period covered is 1890 to 1940.

Alistair Horne, *HOW FAR FROM AUSTERLITZ?: NAPOLEON 1805-1815*. From Napoleon's greatest victory to his downfall at Waterloo.

William Dean Howells, *THE RISE OF SILAS LAPHAM*. Try a little Howells.

André Jardin, Robert Hemenway, and Lydia Davis, *TOCQUEVILLE: A BIOGRAPHY*. Tocqueville went to America to re-start his political career – to get away from it all in France. He ended up making a great contribution to literature and history through his writing about the nine months he spent studying prisons in America in 1831 and 1832. Tocqueville believed, says his biographer, Jardin,

> "The American institutions thus formed a complex system – one of interlocking wheels, and wheels within wheels, in

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which the direct line of command of a centralized regime was not to be found."

Henry James, *WASHINGTON SQUARE.* A little James will improve your image. Also suggested, *THE AMBASSADORS.*

Paul Johnson, *MODERN TIMES.* The history of modern times as told from a prickly conservative point of view. Exciting and well done. Full of rich anecdotes.

Paul Johnson, *A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY.* A readable book of great scope. Written before Paul Johnson's conversion — his conversion, that is, to conservatism.

Michael Katz, *IN THE SHADOW OF THE POORHOUSE.* Reminds us how far social policy has come in America in a century.

◆ John Keane, *TOM PAINE: A POLITICAL LIFE.* Tom Paine lived an extraordinary and wild life — a friend then foe of George Washington, a member of the French Assembly during the Revolution, and almost guillotined. He knew Napoleon, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and Edmund Burke, and wrote what were arguably the three most influential books of the eighteenth century — *Common Sense, The Rights of Man,* and *The Age of Reason.* An exciting, fast-paced story well told.

◆ David M. Kennedy, *FREEDOM FROM FEAR: THE AMERICAN PEOPLE IN DEPRESSION AND WAR, 1929-1945.* Kennedy's treatment of FDR, the Depression, and the New Deal is exceptional. Even though you know the story, Kennedy puts a new spin on the main events and leading characters.

Paul Kennedy, *THE RISE AND FALL OF THE GREAT POWERS.* Begin with parts 7-8, then read parts 1-6.

William Kennedy, *BILLY PHELAN'S GREATEST GAME.* Among Kennedy's Albany books, this is my favorite.

Ralph Ketcham, *JAMES MADISON.* Ketcham's book is not an easy read, but it is a full and good treatment of the life of a great American whose story you should know. A brilliant man who was much more successful as a political philosopher than as a politician.

◆ Richard M. Ketcham, *SARATOGA: TURNING POINT OF AMERICA'S REVOLUTIONARY WAR.* The strategy was for Burgoyne and Howe to meet in Albany and split the colonies. It all might have been different if they had. Ketcham brings life to the story of why they didn't connect up.

Russell Kirk, *THE CONSERVATIVE MIND FROM BURKE TO SANTAYANA.* Written in 1953, this hard-hitting, vibrant book states the case for conservatism in a way that still makes one think hard.

Henry A. Kissinger, *THE WHITE HOUSE YEARS.* A brilliant writer about government and politicians.

Joe Klein, *PRIMARY COLORS: A NOVEL OF POLITICS.* In 1996, I first listed this book as by Anonymous, but I never had doubts about who wrote it. It is almost word-for-word a fictionalization of Klein's *New York Magazine* accounts of Clinton's experiences in the 1992 presidential primaries.

Richard Kluger, *SIMPLE JUSTICE.* A history of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education,* 1954, the school desegregation case.

Jerzy Kosinski, *BEING THERE.* This is a funny and compelling book. It is really about the modern world of spin doctors, TV spots, and glib politics. Kosinski's book *THE PAINTED BIRD* is also recommended.

Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *PEOPLE OF THE LAKE.* This is the story of discoveries of prehistoric man in Africa up to about 1978. I don't know if it is still the scientific party line. I doubt it. But I liked this book. Leakey and his family were scientific pioneers whose personal story is told here.

Nicholas Lemann, *THE PROMISED LAND: THE GREAT BLACK MIGRATION AND HOW IT CHANGED AMERICA.* An account of the effect of the mechanization of cotton picking on the lives of black Americans and on national social policy. Lemann's treatment of social policymaking in Washington is exceptional.

Michael Lewis, *LIAR'S POKER*. On greed on Wall Street as seen by a young Princeton-trained investment banker in the high-flying eighties.

◆ Michael Lewis, *THE NEW NEW THING: A SILICON VALLEY STORY*. This new book by Michael Lewis is my second most important recommended book for 2000, along with Tom Friedman's *The Lexus and The Olive Tree*. This book is a fast-paced new-culture account of the wild life of Jim Clark, founder of three consecutive billion-dollar-plus e-commerce blockbusters, the most famous of which was Netscape. Michael Lewis tells the story of this impresario of the information age in a way that shows the profound changes that have occurred in the role of all of the players in and around the information economy.

Sinclair Lewis, *MAIN STREET*. Also recommended by Sinclair Lewis, *IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE*.

Machiavelli, *THE PRINCE*. Lots to ponder: "A man who wishes to make a profession of goodness in everything must necessarily come to grief among so many who are not good. Therefore, it is necessary . . . to learn how not to be good, and to use this knowledge and not use it, according to the necessity of the case."

Madison, Hamilton, Jay, *THE FEDERALIST PAPERS*. This is the greatest American political science book ever written according to Clinton Rossiter. It is all the more amazing because these were also among America's earliest op-ed articles. Read Nos. 9, 10, 39, 47, 51, 70, and 78. The best edition is the Mentor Edition edited by Clinton Rossiter. Papers numbers 10 and 51, both by Madison, are the most important essays. Not recreational, but I can't leave it out.

William Manchester, *THE LAST LION – WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL*. Breezy, good, fun to read.

◆ Nelson Mandela, *LONG WALK TO FREEDOM*. I'm not a fan of autobiographies, but Mandela wins over the reader. He spent twenty-six years in prison and captured his captors with extraordinary political savvy and great human decency.

◆ Richard Marius, *THOMAS MORE: A BIOGRAPHY*. This is a readable biography by a Harvard professor that brings to life the times of Henry VIII — who in turn put Thomas More, his Chief Minister, to death!

Robert Massie, *PETER THE GREAT*. Massie's books on Russia are excellent; this is one of my favorite biographies. Also recommended: *NICHOLAS AND ALEXANDRA*.

Garrett Mattingly, *THE ARMADA*. Reads like a novel on a shaping event of the late 16th century.

David G. McCulloch, *TRUMAN*. This is a rich biography and a wonderful read for the flow of the narrative. The author obviously became increasingly and warmly admiring of his subject. "Sweeping and vivid," said one reviewer. It is a big book (1,100 pages). I like big books; they stay with you longer. The qualities of Truman make for a wonderful story and the period covered is an important one. McCulloch's *Truman* has legs.

William McFeely, *GRANT*. A favorite biography of mine about a complicated man. Grant himself was a fine writer.

James McPherson, *BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM: THE CIVIL WAR ERA*. This is a masterpiece! Lucid and comprehensive. Don't miss it.

Dick Morris, *BEHIND THE OVAL OFFICE: WINNING THE PRESIDENCY IN THE NINETIES*. You may be surprised that I list this probably highly fictional book by Dick Morris. Despite his self-flagellating account of his downfall with a prostitute, Morris spins a fascinating story of his close relationship with President Clinton to plan strategy for the 1996 Presidential election. Morris's title could have been: *How All Alone I Balanced the Budget and Got Clinton to Sign the Welfare Bill*. His memoir reveals an awful shallowness in American high politics and the ubiquitousness of political fund raising and television campaigning. The book is not a mystery story, but it's *scary* anyway. *The Washington Post* called the book "a 359-page leak . . . in which Morris takes credit for everything except tracking down the Unabomber."

Edmund Morris, *THE RISE OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT.* Tough guy, amazing life, good book.

James Morris, *HEAVEN'S COMMAND, PAX BRITANNICA,* and *FAREWELL THE TRUMPETS.* A triptych on the rise and decline of the British Empire. The series begins with Queen Victoria's ascension and ends with Churchill's death.

Charles Murray, *LOSING GROUND: AMERICAN SOCIAL POLICY, 1950-1980.* There is an old joke. Someone asks do you know such-and-such a book, and the answer is, "Yes, but not personally." To understand what has happened to U.S. Social policy in the '90s, you have to know this influential book personally. It was published in 1984 and really made waves.

Peggy Noonan, *WHAT I SAW AT THE REVOLUTION: A POLITICAL LIFE IN THE REAGAN ERA.* She wrote this book in sound bites and captured the modern political spirit for better or worse, mostly for worse I'd say. Her description of our TV culture is choice. She was a pioneer spin doctor.

Sheldon Novick, *HONORABLE JUSTICE.* The life of an exceptional man – U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., "the great dissenter." He revolutionized the law, stressing the law as experience.

Edwin O'Connor, *THE LAST HURRAH.* Mayor Curley's Boston machine in fine fictional form.

Thomas Pakenham, *THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA, WHITE MAN'S CONQUEST OF THE DARK CONTINENT FROM 1876 TO 1912.* Not a new book (it was published in 1991), but we really need to understand this sad story. The great villain is King Leopold II of Belgium, the founder and the *owner* of the Congo.

Colin Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *MY AMERICAN JOURNEY.* A fine, sensitive, smooth-flowing story of the life of a man of great dignity.

◆ Arthur Quinn, *A NEW WORLD: AN EPIC OF COLONIAL AMERICA FROM THE FOUNDING OF JAMESTOWN TO THE FALL OF QUEBEC.* This is an elegant book that blends history and poetry in hard-edged stories of our Colonial past.

George Will said of this book, and he's right – "Prose that sings and crackles . . . a scrumptious reminder of the pleasures of historical writing that rises to the level of literature."

J.M. Roberts, *THE PENGUIN HISTORY OF THE WORLD*. This book ranks as one of the best books I have ever read. Roberts, an Oxford historian, wrote a textbook on world history for an American publisher, and then decided to try his hand at a readable narrative for a lay audience. His well-written, flowing, sometimes almost whimsical, history of the world from the ice age to the modern age is a *tour de force*.

Tina Rosenberg, *THE HAUNTED LAND: FACING EUROPE'S GHOSTS AFTER COMMUNISM*. Published in 1995 and winner of a Pulitzer Prize for nonfiction. By the way, a good way to select books is to buy books that win Pulitzer Prizes in history, nonfiction, or biography. Have them around and pick them up when you're in the mood. This is what happened to me with this book, which is a penetrating, thought-provoking account of how four East European satellites adjusted to the end of the Evil Empire. The four countries are the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, and East Germany. The author's focus is on reinventing history in the lives of people across the social spectrum.

Vita Sackville-West, *SAINT JOAN OF ARC*.

Lawrence Sanders. His mysteries are terrific airplane and late night books.

Helen Hooven Santmyer, . . . *AND LADIES OF THE CLUB*. A period piece about life in the Midwest in the 1880s, the heyday of Republican presidents from that region. Written late in life by Santmyer from first-hand experiences. Has conviction and authenticity.

B.F. Skinner, *WALDEN TWO*.

Gene Smith, *WHEN THE CHEERING STOPPED*. The fascinating story of Woodrow Wilson's years of illness. His wife, Edith Bolling Wilson, carried out a cover-up that makes recent events pale by comparison.

◆ Dava Sobel, *GALILEO'S DAUGHTER: A HISTORICAL MEMOIR OF SCIENCE, FAITH, AND LOVE.* Based on letters from Galileo's daughter, a nun, to her father. (His letters to her are lost.) This is a sensitive human story that tells how science advances. Galileo's invention of the telescope and his discovery of sunspots led him to decide that Copernicus was right – and in 1633 to be excommunicated for doing so.

Ronald Steele, *WALTER LIPPMANN AND THE AMERICAN CENTURY.* You'll learn a lot from this intelligent book.

John Steinbeck, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH.* The great American novel.

Irving Stone, *THE ORIGIN.* About Charles Darwin, a terrific story well told. A fascinating man. He only left home once, but that was some big adventure.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN.*

Jonathan Swift, *GULLIVER'S TRAVELS.* I love it! Every word.

Alan Taylor, *WILLIAM COOPER'S TOWN: POWER AND PERSUASION ON THE FRONTIER OF THE EARLY AMERICAN REPUBLIC.* This book, which won a Pulitzer, is history at its best. In the years after the American Revolution, the frontier was western New York, and William Cooper was one of the most aggressive speculator-developers in the region. His son, James Fenimore Cooper, wrote a fictional and not very charitable account of his father's life, *The Pioneers.* Historian Alan Taylor weaves the real story and the novel into a fascinating account of two generations.

Leo Tolstoy, *WAR AND PEACE.* A must read.

Barbara Tuchman, *THE GUNS OF AUGUST.* About World War I. History at its best.

Ivan Turgenev, *FATHERS AND SONS.* Crisp, one of the best of the Russians.

Carl Van Doren, *THE GREAT REHEARSAL.* Like Catherine Drinker Bowen's book on the writing of the U.S. constitution, this is an excellent, fast-paced story.

Voltaire, *CANDIDE*. Read it again and think about Frazier's *COLD MOUNTAIN*.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE* is a classic, and is Vonnegut's best. Also recommended from Vonnegut are *PLAYER PIANO* and *THE SIRENS OF TITAN*.

Booker T. Washington, *UP FROM SLAVERY*.

Edith Wharton, *ETHAN FROME* and *THE AGE OF INNOCENCE*. Mix in a little Wharton.

William Allen White, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE*. American journalist of the first part of this century. "What's the matter with Kansas?" The answer – nothing. He also wrote *PURITAN IN BABYLON*, a biography of Calvin Coolidge.

Oscar Wilde, *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*. Don't miss it! Especially recommended for middle-aged people. Might cheer you up. Take life as it is – you have no choice.

◆ James Q. Wilson, *BUREAUCRACY: WHAT GOVERNMENT AGENCIES DO AND WHY THEY DO IT*. The best book on this subject – candid, insightful, highly readable. "Sprightly and irreverent," said Pat Moynihan.

Thomas Wolfe, *YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN*. A classic, his best.

◆ Tom Wolfe, *A MAN IN FULL*. I resisted this book when it came out, but when I got into it I found it compelling. His satire is Swiftian. Among the targets – college football, bankers, politicians, prisons, the underclass, and big city developers. I'm not keen on the construction of this book or the ending, but Wolfe's portrayals of contemporary American life, like them or not, are more than worth the price of admission.

Tom Wolfe, *RADICAL CHIC AND MAU-MAUING THE FLAK CATCHERS*. *THE BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES*. Rich satire. Swiftian!

Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong, *THE BRETHREN: INSIDE THE SUPREME COURT*. An amazing inside view of the Burger Court. My bet is that these kinds of personal dynamics re-

flect what really goes on inside the Supreme Court. Helps you read the newspaper.

Richard Wright, *NATIVE SON*. A powerful book that shaped attitudes in the fifties about race in America.

Malcolm X, *THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MALCOLM X*. An important life and a crackling, readable book.

Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *THE COMMANDING HEIGHTS: THE BATTLE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE MARKETPLACE THAT IS REMAKING THE MODERN WORLD*. An essay about how globalization and privatization have reduced the role of governments.

William Zinsser, *ON WRITING WELL*, Fourth Edition. This book appropriately comes at the end of the list. It is the best book to read about how to do your own good writing. I have given copies to lots of students, and I refer to it often. Here are two gems from Zinsser:

> "Very few sentences come out right the first time, or even the third time. Remember this as a consolation in moments of despair. If you find that writing is hard, it's because it is hard. It's one of the hardest things that people do.

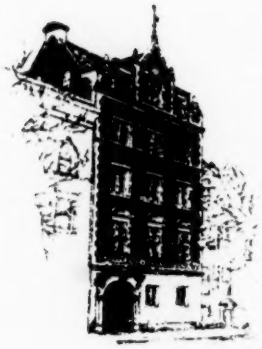
> Look for the clutter in your writing and prune it ruthlessly. Be grateful for everything you can throw away. Reexamine each sentence that you put on paper. Is every word doing new work? Can any thought be expressed with more economy? Is anything pompous or pretentious or faddish? Are you hanging on to something useless just because you think it's beautiful?"

RULES FOR REGULAR READERS

1. Decide what type of books you like best. For me, it's history and biographies. One of my pet peeves is we don't teach students enough history.
2. Rule No. 2 is especially important:

   If you don't like a book, don't finish it. Never force yourself to read a book you aren't enjoying.

3. Read each day, even if only for half an hour.
4. Buy a lot of books. Used books are best. Mark them up. A good system is to underline the parts you like, and note the page numbers up front. Take possession of your books!
5. Another good rule is that if a book is more than thirty years old and you've heard about it, you should try it.
6. Don't watch too much TV. Groucho Marx once said, "TV is good for me, because every time someone turns it on I go and read a book."



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